

Cheers for “Eggstra” Safe Holiday Recipes

by Cici Williamson and Pat Moriarty



You may want to update holiday recipes that use raw or lightly-cooked eggs to avoid the risk of foodborne illness. That’s because we now know that refrigerated grade A eggs with clean, uncracked shells—those usually assumed to be safe—can be contaminated with *Salmonella enteritidis* bacteria.

Scientists strongly suspect that bacteria can be transmitted from infected laying hens directly into the interior of the eggs before the shells are formed.

Many government agencies are doing research on the problem, which is a worldwide epidemic. The problem is greater in Europe due to a more virulent strain of the bacteria called “phage type 4,” which has not been found in U.S. poultry production.

Eggs must be cooked thoroughly in order to kill any bacteria—such as salmonella that may be present. If your eggnog recipe calls for raw eggs, it’s not safe. Likewise, neither is Hollandaise sauce or mousse. Don’t worry about cakes, cookies and candies though. Eggs used in baking get thoroughly cooked, and candy (such as divinity) containing eggs reaches temperatures far above that needed to kill bacteria. However, raw cookie dough isn’t safe to eat!

But back to eggnog—way back. For centuries, our English ancestors made a similar milk and egg beverage that was cooked and served warm. Named for a small drinking vessel known as a “noggin,” eggnog was often served in colonial times to colonists who were “under the weather.”

HOLIDAY EGGNOG

1 quart two percent milk
6 eggs
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla

1 cup whipping cream, whipped
ground nutmeg
Calories: 135 per 1/2 cup
Cholesterol: 120 mg. per 1/2 cup
Yield: 2 quarts

Heat milk in large saucepan until hot (do not boil or scald). While milk is heating, beat together eggs and salt in a large bowl, gradually adding the sugar. Gradually add the hot milk mixture to the egg mixture. Transfer the mixture back to the large saucepan and cook on medium-low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk until the mixture thickens and just coats a spoon. Thermometer should register 160° F. Stir in vanilla. Cool quickly by setting pan in a bowl of ice or cold water and stirring for about 10 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, several hours or overnight. Pour into a bowl or pitcher. Fold in whipped cream and dust with ground nutmeg.

Today it is a popular holiday drink made with raw eggs and served chilled, sometimes with spirits added. While adding alcohol may inhibit bacterial growth, it cannot be relied upon to kill bacteria which may be present in raw eggs.



To make safe eggnog, cook it to 145° F or microwave it to 170° F, or until the egg mixture thickens enough to coat a spoon (see accompanying recipes). Refrigerate it at once. When refrigerating a large amount of eggnog, divide it into several shallow containers so that it will cool quickly. Do not fold raw, beaten egg whites into the cooked mixture. It hasn't been proven that raw egg whites are free of salmonella bacteria. Commercial eggnog is prepared with pasteurized eggs and requires no cooking. Eggnog made with egg substitutes is also safe since these frozen commercial products have been pasteurized. Hollandaise sauce and chocolate mousse are usually made with raw eggs. Update these recipes for safety's sake. A safe Hollandaise sauce can be made with egg substitutes and margarine. This version has the added bonus of containing no cholesterol. When making chocolate mousse, melt the chocolate with the liquid called for in the recipe, add the eggs and continue to heat gently until the mixture reaches the safe temperature of 160° F. Holidays are a fun but hectic time. By egg-proofing your recipes for safety, you'll have one less thing to worry about.

For more information contact



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LOW-CHOLESTEROL EGGNOG*

1/2 cup egg substitute
2 teaspoons sugar
1 can (13 oz.) evaporated skim milk
3/4 cup skim milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon rum flavoring (optional)
ground nutmeg

Calories: 96 per 1/2 cup
Cholesterol: 4 mg. per 1/2 cup
Yield: 3 cups

Whip egg substitute and sugar together and combine with two types of milk and flavoring. Mix well. Chill overnight. Dust with nutmeg before serving.

*From the New American Diet-William Connor, M.D. and Sonja Connor, R.D. Simon and Schuster. N.Y., 1986.

ZERO-CHOLESTEROL HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

1/2 cup egg substitute
Calories: 35 per Tbsp.
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice,
pinch of cayenne pepper
1/3 cup margarine

Cholesterol: 0
Yield: 1 cup

Put egg substitute, lemon juice and cayenne pepper into a blender or food processor. Blend. Heat margarine to boiling, either on the stove or in a glass measuring cup in the microwave. Turn on blender and pour boiling margarine through lid. Blend. Sauce should thicken slightly.

CHOCOLATE MOCHA MOUSSE

6 ounces semisweet chocolate
1/4 cup water
1 teaspoon instant coffee powder
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup sugar
2 tablespoons coffee liqueur
1 cup heavy cream, whipped

Calories: 387 per 1/2 cup
Yield: Six 1/2 cup servings

Combine chocolate, water and coffee powder in a heavy saucepan. Heat over very low heat until chocolate melts. Add eggs. Stirring constantly, heat until mixture reaches 160° F. Stir in sugar and coffee liqueur. Cool quickly by setting pan in a bowl of cold water, stirring occasionally for about 10 minutes. Fold whipped cream into chocolate mixture. Spoon into six (4 oz.) dessert dishes. Refrigerate two hours or more before serving.

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